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STAT

They're Calling It the Sunday Night Massacre

KISSINGER REMAINS STRONG MAN IN U.S. SECURITY APPARATUS SHAKEUP

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President Ford's decision to fire Defense Secretary James R. Schlesinger and CIA Director William E. Colby, while divesting Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger of his White House job as head of the National Security Council, today is being called the "Sunday Night Massacre" because of its swiftness and the sweeping changes it triggers in the U.S. security apparatus.

But the White House action to get rid of Schlesinger and Colby was for much more complex reasons than former President Richard M. Nixon's dismissal of the Justice Department officials who refused to fire Watergate Special Prosecutor Archibald Cox — the so-called Saturday Night Massacre.

Colby's departure from the CIA has been expected for a long time, while Schlesinger's ouster is rooted in his bitter confrontations with Kissinger and key members of Congress on both policy and political matters.

KISSINGER LOSES little in giving up his other hat as NSC chief, since he is expected to be replaced by Air Force Lt. Gen. Brent Scowcroft, the NSC deputy chief and an unquestioned Kissinger loyalist. While Kissinger is not overjoyed at losing his White House office and the extra access it gives him to Ford, administration sources say the elevation of Scowcroft leaves the secretary of state in an excellent

power position with the President.

Persistent but unconfirmed reports are that Schlesinger will be replaced by White House Chief of Staff Donald Rumsfeld. Well informed sources say the housecleaning at the top level of the national security apparatus will produce these changes:

- Schlesinger will leave government and be replaced by Rumsfeld.
- Colby also will leave and be replaced by George Bush, the U.S. representative to the Peoples Republic of China.
- Kissinger, entrenched at the State Department, will be replaced at NSC by his protege, Scowcroft.
- Rumsfeld will be replaced as White House chief of staff by his deputy and alter ego, Richard Cheney.
- Bush will be replaced in Peking by Senate Minority Leader Hugh Scott, R-Pa., who reportedly does not intend to run for another term next November.

REPORTERS covering Ford's all-day visit with Egyptian President Anwar Sadat in Jacksonville, Fla., yesterday ran into the tightest lid of secrecy of the current administration.

Ford gave newsmen a wide berth when they began trying to check the mounting reports in mid-afternoon. Press Secretary Ronald Nessen was asked to talk about details of the shakeup last night but said, "I can't."

Nessen also did not visit the small pool of reporters in the rear of Air Force One on the flight back to Washington, as he generally does on presidential trips, and did not respond to a note asking him to do so.

Kissinger, normally the most accessible of officials during flights, turned aside all inquiries about the shakeup with quips. When told by a reporter on the President's plane that the changes cried out for explanation, Kissinger smiled and said, "It's a military coup. Don't be surprised if we land at an Air Force base."

Earlier, Kissinger had expressed ignorance of any changes. But he, too, later adopted the stonewall tactics of giving no response to questions.

BUT KISSINGER supporters, who refused to be quoted, argued that the secretary was not responsible for the firing of Schlesinger. The implication, however, is that Kissinger had to give up his NSC foothold in the White House as part of the price for the Schlesinger's removal.

Both men, strong-minded intellectuals with healthy egos, have made no secret of their disagreements, while refusing to call their dispute a feud.

The rationale for each change in the security hierarchy, based on known facts and guarded comments of administration officials is as follows:

SCHLESINGER: Antagonized George Mahon, D-Tex., chairman of the powerful House Appropriations Committee two weeks ago by denouncing in blunt terms a \$9 billion defense budget cut. Mahon then declared that the \$90 billion approved by the House was adequate for peacetime defense and gave fuel to Senate liberals resisting conservative efforts to restore the cuts.

Schlesinger also antagonized Kissinger by accusing him of being too eager to conclude a strategic arms limitation treaty with the Soviet Union and of raising the possibility of sending Pershing missiles to Israel without telling the Pentagon.

These issues made Schlesinger politically expendable with both liberal and conservative members of Congress, although for different reasons.

COLBY: While he is not held responsible for illegal or reprehensible acts of the CIA over the past 15 years, Colby has been accused by liberals of disclosing too little and by conservatives of divulging too much about the intelligence agency.

Colby has seemed to recognize that his days were numbered, and it has been widely assumed that his resignation would come before the Senate Select Intelligence Committee issues its report on assassination plots.

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